

WHAT'S LEFT IN BOSTON

A Community Calendar of Progressive Cultural & Political Events

The Ruby Rogers Center and Mental Patient's Liberation

by Judi Chamberlin, Program Coordinator

Some people think of "mental patients" as helpless; some people think of them as dangerous. At the Ruby Rogers Advocacy and Drop-In Center, we know that neither of these stereotypes is true. The Center is a place where people who have been labeled "mentally ill" have joined together to work for self-help and empowerment. There are no mental health professionals at the Center, only people who have spent time in mental institutions and are now trying to improve their lives.

We see the psychiatric system as an oppressive force in our lives, which says it is there to help, but instead offers only control. We have been locked up against our will, forced to take mind-bending drugs with serious physical effects, and stripped of our individuality and human dignity. We see our need to be liberated from the mental health system!

This is not to deny that people are sometimes troubled, and may therefore act in ways that appear mysterious, even threatening. But rather than label such behavior "mental illness," and isolate the person so labeled, we believe that care and compassion are the best "treatment",

The Ruby Rogers Center is an outgrowth of the Mental Patients' Liberation Front, which was started in Boston in 1971, and is probably the oldest ex-patient organization in continuous existence in the United States. MPLF has organized patients in and out of institutions, has published a patients' rights handbook, has run consciousness-raising groups for its members, and has tried to educate the general public about our view of the mental health system. We have lobbied to increase rights for patients and the protection of these rights, as well as to prevent the passage of laws which would take away those few rights we have.

Most people don't realize how easy it is to be forcibly committed into the mental health system. A person can be held on a ten-day involuntary commitment (a pink paper) just on the say so of a doctor (not necessarily a psychiatrist) and the process can be instigated by anyone (a "friend", a



neighbor, a family member, employer, etc.). Once in the institution, a person is put in the position of having to "prove" his/her sanity—not an easy proposition! In fact, a person accused of "mental illness" has fewer rights than one accused of a criminal offense!

The ex-patients' movement began in reaction to these conditions. We looked at examples of other groups that had organized, such as blacks, women, gays and lesbians, and physically disabled people. We saw that it was important to define for ourselves who we were, and to demand control over our own lives. The movement, which began in the early '70's in Boston, New York, San Francisco, and a few other cities, has now grown to the point where it is organized nationally and internationally. We have a national organization (the National Association of Psychiatric Survivors), and are in touch with groups in Canada, Britain, Germany, Denmark, Holland, Portugal, Australia, New Zealand, and some others. Around the world, it appears that ex-patients experience the same kinds of oppression and have defined the same needs for liberation.

At the Ruby Rogers Center, we provide a comfortable setting where former patients can gather to discuss our common needs and develop our own ways of meeting them.

We do things for fun, such as trips and parties, and we work to bring about changes in the mental health system. Just our existence is a way of showing people that, although we have been labeled "mentally ill," we can control our own program. We manage a budget in excess of \$85,000 a year, employ a number of our members to run the day-to-day affairs of the center, and serve as role models to one another. Although our funding comes from the Department of Mental Health, we are completely independent, and all decisions are made by the members in our weekly business meetings. We urge anyone who is, has been, or is at risk of becoming a client of the mental health system to visit our center at 2336 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge (rear basement), or to call us at 876-4742. Our handbook (*Your Rights as a Mental Patient in Massachusetts*) is available from us for \$2.90 (including postage), and is provided free to current patients. Although the handbook is currently out of print, we are working on a revised edition that should be available soon. As we say in the handbook, "The task of liberation is the task of the patients themselves!"

Who is Ruby Rogers and Why Did You Name Your Center After Her?

Who is Ruby Rogers and Why Did You Name Your Center After Her?

Ruby Rogers is a person who exemplifies self-help and self-advocacy for people in the mental health system. Ruby was a patient at Boston State Hospital who, in the mid-1970's, became involved in a patients' rights group facilitated by members of Mental Patients' Liberation Front (MPLF). In 1975, she became the chief plaintiff in a landmark lawsuit against the Massachusetts mental health system, which ended with a 1983 court decision (widely known as the *Rogers* decision) establishing the right of Massachusetts patients to refuse unwanted psychiatric drugs under most circumstances. When MPLF received funding from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health to start operating the first ex-patient run self-help program in the state, we decided to call it the Ruby Rogers Center to honor Ruby's strength and dedication to patients' rights. Ruby Rogers currently lives in Cambridge.

The following short reviews were taken from Psychiatry as Social Control: An Annotated Bibliography compiled by the Alliance for the Liberation of Mental Patients in Philadelphia, The Network Against Psychiatric Assault in San Francisco and the Mental Patients Liberation Front in Boston. The document is long out of print, but photocopies are available at Red Book.

Chamberlin, Judi *On Our Own: Patient-Controlled Alternatives to the Mental Health System*. McGraw Hill, 1978.

This excellent new book is a first-hand account of the existing alternatives to institutional psychiatry, and a how-to guide for the creation of new ones. *On Our Own* is a personal account of the "career" of a psychiatric inmate, and the struggle of a woman coming to grips with the oppression resulting from her search for self-understanding. The early

chapters of the book detail her own experiences in private and state institutions. In the section, "Real Alternatives and False Alternatives", she explains why community "mental health" centers and halfway houses are simply extensions of psychiatric "normalization." As Judi notes, "Since more and more kinds of behavior are being redefined as psychiatric in nature, psychiatry is creating an ever greater 'need' for services." The bulk of the book is given over to practical discussions of how groups of ex-inmates and/or non-professionals have set up centers to support people going through life-crises. *On Our Own* is a readable, exciting book. Anyone interested in building non-coercive alternatives to the mental illness industry will find it invaluable.

Ennis, Bruce; and Emery, Richard D. *The Rights of Mental Patients*, Revised Edition, Avon Books, 1978

Consistent with the growth of litigation and legislation concerning psychiatric inmates' rights (or lack of them), the book contains well-researched analyses, on a chapter-by-chapter basis with ample references, of issues such as involuntary and "voluntary" hospitalization, the civil commitment process, rights in the institution, patients in the criminal process, and so on. The historical rise of "medical" justifications for involuntary confinement is traced briefly. Although the authors explicitly recognize the social control function of involuntary psychiatry and its labeling, they at times imply but do not openly advocate an abolitionist stance, and consciously refrain from rejecting the term "mental illness." There is a quite lengthy discussion of what the authors consider a means of *liberating* inmates. The authors' concessions to certain oppressive concepts, i.e., the permissibility of forced "treatment" on persons found to be legally incompetent to give informed consent, point out the limitations of a Constitutional approach relying on legal precedent rather than a human rights approach relying on more basic codified ethical principles.

Donaldson, Kenneth, *Insanity Inside Out*. Crown Publishers, 1976

Autobiographical account of one psychiatric inmate's fight to gain his release from a state institution during 15 years of incarceration. Graphic depictions of institutional brutality, staff harassment of inmates, bureaucratic stupidity, and the injustice of a court system which time and time again refused to hear Donaldson's case. Yet Donaldson remains convinced that the American legal system is really just; his political outlook is limited by his conservatism and his failure to challenge the "right to treatment" concept which his lawyers insisted upon using. Otherwise, this is an impressive chronicle of endurance in the face of overwhelming legal and psychiatric oppression.

Gotkin, Janet and Paul. *Too Much Anger, Too Many Tears: A personal Triumph over Psychiatry*. Time Books, 1975

By an ex-patient active in the mental patients' liberation movement, this book attacks the idea of mental illness, showing it to be a way of denying people the basic right to their feelings—feelings, including suicidal wishes, depression and fear, are the experience of being human, she says. It attacks psychiatry as a big business and a prison system which largely depends on people's faith for the perpetuation of its lies and brutality. An inspiring work—the last few chapters especially should be thought about carefully.

Screw: A Guard's View of Bridgewater State Hospital
by Tom Ryan with Bob Casey, (c) 1981.

Tom Ryan, the author, first visited Massachusetts Correctional Institution, Bridgewater (35 miles southwest of Boston) as a volunteer while he was a student at Bridgewater State College. As a 'counselor' at the State Hospital section of Bridgewater (for the criminally insane) he heard stories of beatings and brutality, especially concerning the F (admissions and seclusion) ward.

Ryan's first idea was to arrange to be admitted as a patient in order to find out what conditions were really like for "patients" at the "hospital". This, he found, was not possible to arrange safely. His next idea was to get a job as a CO (correction officer) at the facility in order to observe conditions at MCI Bridgewater.

Ryan served as a student counselor and then as a guard between 1972 and 1975.

In order to comprehend the full force of this book, one has to understand who end up as 'patients' at Bridgewater. People can be incarcerated in the 'hospital' without ever having been charged with a crime. The length of time served there depends directly on the presence or absence of 'pink slips' which are written by COs. The 'pink slip' doesn't describe what was going on before the patient lost control, whether or not he was beaten or harassed prior to being 'written up'. It only gives negative descriptions of patient behavior. When the 'patient' appears before the prison psychiatrist and superintendent in a hearing to determine whether or not he will be released, the pink slips are used to prevent the patient from being returned to society.

Bridgewater was founded in 1855 to be a workhouse for "lazy people." Today Bridgewater holds addicts, retarded people, juvenile delinquents, criminal alcoholics and "sex deviants." People who are powerless, that is poor, poorly educated, with poor job skills, who belong to a minority, who have little support from family and workplace, such people can wind up incarcerated at MCI Bridgewater. That is the first thing to realize when reading this book.

The men at Bridgewater are "diagnosed" as dangerous to society often after they are already imprisoned there and have fallen victim to the beatings, harassment, hopelessness and despair of the institution.

The innocence or guilt of a patient is not an issue. If you are incarcerated at Bridgewater you are presumed guilty, especially by the guards, the Corrections Officers that decide every issue of your life including whether or not you will have food to eat and whether or not you will be allowed to use the toilet to relieve yourself. Quite often, both needs are denied.

COs, victims themselves of poor education and limited job opportunities, refer to the patients as "maggots" and view any therapeutic contact with inmates as "fraternization." Inmates only see psychiatrists when they are up for a hearing. Nurses described as being repulsed by patients and are incompetent to offer decent medical care. Only the forced "medication" (usually neuroleptic drugs) are offered in the way of 'therapy'.

The patient is drugged to a point where he has difficulty controlling himself and his feelings, harassed by the guards into shouting or other aggressive behavior for which he then receives 'pink slips'. Food and bathroom privileges are withheld.

Racial and other epithets are a constant part of CO and inmate interaction. As a result, the "patient" becomes caught in the system from which he is powerless to escape and return to society.

Beatings are frequent and inexplicable, almost random in application, further causing the patient to lose self control and a sense of a just and rational reality.

The system itself is insane and the patients' response to it is documented to keep him incarcerated in an open-ended situation. There is no such thing as serving time. Time becomes a tool of the state so that the 'patient' has less rights than the prisoner.

Forced medication, which is crippling mentally and physically, is another indignity unique to "patients" in the big business that is the Mental Health Establishment.

It is significant to note that according to Tom Ryan's catalog of incidents revealing the hopelessly oppressive nature of this institution, many of the COs are members of a right wing extremist group, *The Minutemen*. These COs, who essentially see genocide as a healthy response to integration, are in control of the Black and Hispanic patients at the facility.

A favorite horror movie plot is to put a sane person inside of a mental hospital with no way of establishing or proving his sanity. The system at Bridgewater is especially pernicious in its use of psychology to justify concentration camp-like conditions for the 'crazies'. If, after reading this book, the reader doesn't feel threatened by the existence of such an institution in Massachusetts, it is only because Ryan's eyewitness and hands-on reports are such extraordinary violations of human rights that it is hard to comprehend their reality.

When Bridgewater was first established for "lazy people" in 1855, it might be said that the word 'misfit' was generally applied to incarcerated people. The horror of Bridgewater is how far we have progressed in our ability to torment and punish people who don't fit an economic niche in our society, and who serve no economic purpose.

When the new hospital was opened during Tom Ryan's work there, the new facilities meant an end to patients having "pots" in their cells to go to the bathroom at night. Instead, it was designed with a toilet on each ward. This 'advance' turned into another cruel and unusual punishment as guards decided to keep men locked in their rooms and have them ring a bell when they had to use the new bathroom facilities. If the ring went unanswered, as it often did, the patients were abused for peeing or defecating in their cells and made to live with the 'mess' for long periods of time before it was cleaned up. The result of the improved facility was to make going to the bathroom a nerve-wracking form of torture and make the 'patients' more dependent on the hostile guards than they were under the old pot system.

Bridgewater and places like it punish doubly, for being "criminal" and for being "sick." It offers no hope for reform. As long as people in our society are punished for not fitting the economic and societal norm, the system corrupts both the people it is designed to persecute and the people who supposedly are being "protected" from the "patients."

MCI Bridgewater is a violent, unjust, and corrupt dumping ground for people who threaten the status quo by not being able or willing to conform to established ways. This is at the core of all incarceration and 'treatment' of the mentally ill.

-Linda Larson

Boston Study Group: Akido, yoga, vegetarianism, Gandhi, Thoreau, Adorno, Reich, Frankfort School, Critical Theory, Situationalism. Write: Mat, 205 School St., Somerville, Ma 02143

Thurs 1 noon **Caribbean Literature and Caribbean Society: Recent Trends.** A talk by Professor Selwyn Cudjoe. At 356 Ell Center, Wellesley College

Fri 2 12:30 - 2:00 pm Join **Women in Black** protesting **Israel's brutal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.** For women only. Dress in black. Demonstrate outside Israel's consulate near Park Plaza Hotel. (entrance nearest Arlington St. Station)

11:00 am - 1:00 pm **Open Discussion on Coming Out for Women of All Ages.** Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

8:00 pm **Prospects for Research Conversion in the 1990's,** a Black Rose Lecture with Vera Kistakowsky. New trends in the global political situation are leading to reductions in military expenditures. How can we best utilize the "peace dividend"? How will reduced military funding affect university research? How can we insure that research is done for the public benefit? Free. At MIT Room 9-150, 105 Mass. Ave, Cambridge. Info: 524-0781

8:30 - midnight **Lesbian/Gay/Bi Swing and Ballroom Dance.** Fill up your dance card at *Swingtime*, Boston's monthly Lesbian, Gay and Bi Swing and Ballroom Dance. Dance the night away to the fabulous sounds of Big Band music in a friendly, smoke-free atmosphere. This month there will be merengue and swing lessons form 8:30 to 9:15 pm, followed by swing and ballroom dancing until midnight. Admission is \$4.00. The dance is on the second floor of Ballet, Etc., at 185 Corey Road in Brookline, an easy walk from the Washington St. stop on the Boston College Green Line. Info: 661-1792

Sun 4 11:00 am **A View from the Caribbean of the Panama Invasion.** Marc Frank, Havana correspondant of the *People's Daily World*; only full-time, accredited U.S. journalist in Cuba for the past five years; has written over 1000 articles covering the international debt crisis, the politics of most Latin American and Caribbean countries, and changes taking place throughout the world; working on a book about the "rectification" process in Cuba today, the effort to solve economic and other problems of socialism similar to those being addressed by "perestroika" in the USSR and Eastern Europe; former school bus driver and president of union local. At the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St, Info: 266-6710

2:30 pm - 4:30 pm **National Lawyer's Guild Benefit: A Family Concert with Secial Songs for Children** By Marcia Taylor and **Fred Small.** Tix: \$10 adults, \$5 kids in advance, \$12 & \$6 at the door. Tix are available at the National Lawyer's Guild, 14 Beacon St, Red Book, 92 Green St in JP, Sandy's Music Store at 896 Mass Ave in Cambridge. At the B.U. Law School Auditorium, 765 Commonwealth Ave, Boston (B.U. stop on C Green Line train). Info: 227-7335

3:00 pm **Please Join in Celebrating the Hot-Off-the-Press Publication of Cynthia Enloe's Banannas, Beaches and Bases.** Making feminist sense of international politics. Light refreshments served. At New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St, Cambridge. Free. Info: 876-5310, TDD: 876-3340

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm **Update on U.S. Intervention in Central America.** Speakers about Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Panama. At the Committee of Elders, 15 Pearl St, Cambridge. Info: the Cambridgeport Central America Committee at 868-2058

8:00 pm. **Bispace.** A place for all bisexuals to meet and talk. Very informal - no agenda or topic. \$2.00 donation. SONSORED by East Coast Bisexual Network. Women and men welcome. Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston. Please call (617) 247-6683 (BIS-MOVE) for more information.

MARCH

Flora Tristan
(1803 - 1844) feminist, socialist, and free spirit.

Flora Tristan suffered just about every indignity a woman could, including being disinherited by her family and shot by her husband. Yet she survived to agitate for divorce laws, abolition of the death penalty, and equal rights for women. She spent the last years of her life trying to establish a workers union throughout France. Her books (including her last, Workers Union, (1843) remain untranslated to this day.

8:00 pm **The Woman who Shot Lenin,** a play by Svetlana Boym. Written by Soviet Emigre and Cambridge playwright, this playful examination of history and truth and the way violent acts by women are often reduced and revised to fit narrow prejudices. Play is through April 8 with five performances each week, Thursdays and Fridays at 8 pm, Saturday at 5 and 8 pm and Sundays at 7pm. Tix: \$13.50 for Fri & Sat eves, \$13 for Thursdays & \$12.50 for Sat afternoons and Sundays. the Charlestown Working Theater, 442 Bunker Hill St, across from the Schraffts Center (Sullivan Sq Orange line stop). Info: 242-3534 Wheelchair Accessible

Fri 9 8:00 pm **Nancy Day in Concert.** An International Women's Day benefit for the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center. Tix \$10, \$15 including fundraising reception available at New Words, 186 Hampshire St, Cambridge & at BARCC or at the door. At the B.U. Concert Hall, 855 Commonwealth Ave, Boston. Info: 492-8306

8:00 pm **American Indan Dance Theatre.** A brilliant company of American Indian Dancers, singers and musicians celebrating their rich heritage. Tix: \$22 & \$17 available at Ticketron and Bostix. At the Emerson Majestic Theatre, 219 Tremont St, Boston.

Sat 10 10:00 am - 5:00 pm **Native American Pow Wow, Film, Dance, Arts and Crafts, Food.** Coordinated by the Local Native American Community and Dance Umbrella. Admission: \$3, under 12: \$1, under 6, free. At the Tremont House, 275 Tremont St, across from the Wang Center, Boston.

8:00 pm **American Indan Dance Theatre.** See Fri 11 listing.

9:00 pm - 12:30 am **Wild Dance** Sponsored by Women's institute for Leadership Development. To raise the roof and raise the money for the 4th annual WILD Summer Institute (June 22-24) Admission: \$5 in advance, \$8 at the door. At the Jamaica Plain Cultural Center, 659 Center St, J.P. Info: 482-6483

Sun 11 11:00 am **What's Really Dying: Socialism There or Capitalism Here?** Michael Albert, co-founder and co-editor of *Z Magazine*, he writes the regular column, "Venting Subversive" a founder and former collective member of South End Pross



Flora Tristan

Wed 14 7:00 pm - 10:30 pm **Bikes not Bombs meets every Wednesday night to package bikes and plan events.** At Ferris Wheels bike and fitness shop, 64 South St, Jamaica Plain. Info: 277-2017

Thurs 15 7:30 pm **Facilitated Open Discussion for Incest Survivors:** Confrontation and the Life After. Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

Fri 16 8:00 pm **Facing the Realities of the Prison System:** Black Rose Lecture with Stanley Jones and Ralph Pagan. The speakers will relate how the criminal "justice" system really functions and suggest humane and truly just alternatives. Free. At MIT Room 9-150, 105 Mass Ave, Cambridge.

7:30-9:30 pm. **Housing in America - A Progressive Perspective.** Course taught by Peter Dryer, Jerry Rubin and Frank Smizik. Four Tuesdays beginning March 20. Sponsored by DSA. Info: 426-9026.

7:00 pm 30+ **Lesbian Rap:** Coming Out to Family, 7:30 pm **Bisexual Women's Rap:** Spring Equinox Party (potluck). Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

Wed 21 7:00 pm **Boston NOW Lesbian Rights Task Force.** Help work on legislation and initiatives to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Support lesbian and gay rights in foster parenting, housing and employment. At the Boston NOW office, 971 Comm. Ave, Boston, Info: 782-1056

7:00 **Education and Children Under Israeli Occupation** is the subject of a presentation by Elana Wolkoff, high school teacher and Amy Engel, kindergarten teacher. Elana and Amy will show slides and exhibit Palestinian children's art gathered on their recent trip to the West Bank sponsored by the Cambridge-Ramallah/El-Bireh Sister City Campaign. At First Congregational Curch, 11 Garden St, Cambridge. Wheelchair Accessible. **Call 492-4934 for more information and to confirm time of event.**

7:00 pm - 10:30 pm **Bikes not Bombs meets every Wednesday night to package bikes and plan events.** At Ferris Wheels bike and fitness shop, 64 South St, Jamaica Plain. Info: 277-2017

Thurs 22 7:30 pm **Open Discussion for Incest Survivors.** Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

Fri 23 8:00 pm **Perspectives on Tiananmen:** Black Rose Lecture with Yang Yi. This talk is a first-hand account of the June 1989 events in Tiananmen Square. Free. At MIT Room 9-150, 105 Mass. Ave, Cambridge. Info: 524-0781

Sat 24 **Archbishop Romero Commemoration and March to End the U.S. War in Central America in Washington D.C.** Buses will leave from the Boston Common at 8:00 pm Friday, March 23. For tickets and information, call CASA at 492-8699

Sun 25 3:00 pm **Electra Arenal and Stacey Schlau and translator Amanda Powell will read from their historical study, Untold Sisters: Hispanic nuns in their own works.** At the New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St, Cambridge. Free. Info: 876-5310

8:00 pm **Mondragon Revisited.** Dr Frank Adams, author and director of educational services at the Industrial Cooperative Association will talk about the network of cooperative enterprises in Mondragon, a city in the Basque country in Spain. At the Red Pipe Room, Weston School of Theology, 3 Phillips place, Cambridge. (corner of Mason St, near the Cambridge Common). Free. Sponsored by the Religion and Socialism Commission, DSA. Info: 232-8755

Mon 26 8:00 pm **Lesbian Rap:** Can Women Be Sexist? Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

6-10 pm. **The Boston Bisexual Women's Network** will hold their monthly **Volunteer Night.** Join us to stuff newsletters, meet new people, talk, work on BBWN projects and business. Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston. All women welcome. Please call (617) 247-6683 (BIS-MOVE) for more information.

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Mon 5 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm **Lesbian Rap: Image of women in popular culture.** Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

Tues 6 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm **Tax Resistance Clinic:** Learn how you can join with other non-payers and stop putting your tax dollars into war, weapons and intervention. Sponsored by New England War Tax Resistance. At the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St, 3rd Floor. Info: 731-6139

7:00 pm 30+ **Lesbian Rap:** Long Distance Relationships, 7:30 pm **Bisexual Women's Rap:** Fashion and Body Image. Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

9:00 pm **Flor de Cana** returns to the Regattabar at the Charles Square Hotel in Cambridge with their unique brand of Pan American music. In addition to their popular, spicy combination of danceable and folkloric music from Central and South America and the Caribbean, the group will unveil a number of new original compositions influenced by world rhythms ranging from reggae and zouk to merengue. The group's last appearance at the Regattabar, in celebration of their fifth anniversary, sold out. This will be their only local appearance this winter. Admission: \$6.50. Info: Water Music at 876-7777

Wed 7 7:00 pm **Boston NOW: In the Streets and In the System: Fighting for Women's Rights.** Open house: for new and prospective activists and members, come find out about NOW's activities and the work we are doing for women's rights, 7pm. **The Feminization of Politics:** Discuss NOW's legislative strategy. Talk will include an overview of the legislative and electoral process in Massachusetts. At 971 Comm. Ave, Boston. Info: 782-1056

7:00 pm - 10:30 pm **Bikes not Bombs meets every Wednesday night to package bikes and plan events.** At Ferris Wheels bike and fitness shop, 64 South St, Jamaica Plain. Info: 277-2017

Thurs 8 4:00 pm **The Song of the Dodo: Visions from a work in progress.** A lecture by David Quammen. Sponsored by the MIT Writing Program. Free. At MIT Building 4-163, 77 Mass Ave, Cambridge. Info: 253-7894

5:30 pm **International Women's Day: Women's Unity for an Expanded Bill of Rights.** Join Boston NOW and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in a celebration including music, drama and poetry at the Longwood Theatre, 364 Brookline Ave, Boston.

6:00 pm **Northeastern Women's Center will sponsor a panel discussion on Women Influencing Public Policy** at Northeastern University.

7:30 pm **Open Discussion for Incest Survivors.** Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

by the Local Native American Community and Dance Umbrella. Admission: \$3, under 12: \$1, under 6, free. At the Tremont House, 275 Tremont St, across from the Wang Center, Boston.

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Sun 11 11:00 am **What's Really Dying: Socialism There or Capitalism Here?** Michael Albert, co-founder and co-editor of *Z Magazine*, he writes the regular column, "Venting Spleen"; a founder and former collective member of South End Press for 10 years; author or co-author of numerous books including, most recently, *Liberating Theory* and *Looking Forward: A Humane Economy for Tomorrow* (both South End) and *Political Economy of Participatory Economics* and *Quiet Revolution in Welfare Economics* (both Princeton University Press); longtime activist in anti-war, anti-intervention campus and community movements. Free. At the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St, Info: 266-6710

3:00 pm - 7:00 pm **Earth Works Letter Writing Party!** Let public officials and corporations hear from you on environmental and/or social justice issues. Choose from over two dozen and/or bring your own. Materials are provided, but donations of recycled paper, stamps, envelopes, pens and snacks are welcome. Call Wendall at 522-2118 or Bill at 983-9463 for location.

2:00 pm & 7:00 pm **American Indan Dance Theatre.** See Fri 11 listing.

3:00 pm **Catharine MacKinnon**, the nationally prominent feminist theorist,, will read from and discuss her newest book, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*. At the New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St, Cambridge. Free. info: 876-5310

Mon 12 7:00 pm **Boston NOW's Electoral and Legislative Committee.** Help organize for feminist candidates, research legislation and coordinate lobbying efforts on the state and local levels. Boston NOW office, 971 Comm. Ave, Boston. Info: 782-1056

8:00 pm **Lesbian Rap:** Staying Friends with Hets. Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

Tues 13 7:00 pm **Boston NOW Reproductive Rights Task Force.** Defend access to safe, legal and funded abortion and to birth control. Work with NOW in planning and organizing to protect reproductive rights and to defend access to abortion clinics. At the Boston NOW office, 971 Comm Ave, Boston. info: 782-1056

7:00 - 9:30 pm **Oral History: A Tool for Advocates and Organizers.** The Oral History Center is offering a three-session workshop specifically for advocates and organizers. \$75 (individuals), \$100 (institutions sending staff). Please register early to ensure enrollment. At the Oral History Center, 186 1/2 Hampshire St, Cambridge. Info: 661-8288

7:00 30+ **Lesbian Rap:** Women's Health. 7:30 pm **Bisexual Women's Rap:** Defining Bisexuality. Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

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Sat 17 11:00 am - 12:30 pm **Single Mothers Open Support Group:** Making Accomodations for a Social Life. Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible, Childcare provided.

BBWN/BBMN Monthly Chinatown Brunch. Come join us for yummy food and good company. Meet under the arch in Chinatown at 10:45 am. Average cost \$6-\$8 /person. Women and men welcome. Call (617) 247-6683 (BIS-MOVE) for more information.

Sun 18 11:00 am **Oscar Chacon**, Director, Interfaith Office on Accompaniment. At the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St, Boston, Info: 266-6710

3:00 pm **Christie Balka and Andy Rose celebrate the publication of their co-edited anthology, *Twice Blessed: on being Lesbian, Gay and Jewish*.** At the New Words Book Store, 186 Hampshire St, Cambridge. Free. Info: 876-5310

4:00 pm - 7:00 pm **Earthworks Letter Writing Party!** See march 11 listing.

Mon 19 7:00 pm **Boston NOW Economic Equity Task Force.** Fight wage discrimination based on sex and race, help in NOW's work for pay equity, for decent welfare benefits, for affordable housing and for accessible childcare. At the Boston NOW office, 971 Comm. Ave, Boston. Info: 782-1056

8:00 pm **Lesbian Rap:** Classism. Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

7:30-9:30 pm. **Introduction to Democratic Socialism Class.** Five Mondays. Speakers include Tom Gallagher, Howard Zinn, Karen Hansen, Paul Joseph. First Parish Church - Harvard Square. Info: 426-9026.

7:30-9:30 pm. Seven Mondays. **Economics in the 90's - A Democratic Socialist Perspective.** Mike Miller, Coordinator. With several different speakers. Workingmen's Circle - 1762 Beacon Street. Sponsored by D.S.A. Info: 426-9026

Tues 20 7:00 - 9:30 pm **Oral History: A Tool for Advocates and Organizers.** See March 13 listing.

Mondragon, a city in the Basque country in Spain. At the Red Pipe Room, Weston School of Theology, 3 Phillips place, Cambridge. (corner of Mason St, near the Cambridge Common). Free. Sponsored by the Religion and Socialism Commission, DSA. Info: 232-8755

Mon 26 8:00 pm **Lesbian Rap: Can Women Be Sexist?** Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

6-10 pm. **The Boston Bisexual Women's Network** will hold their monthly **Volunteer Night.** Join us to stuff newsletters, meet new people, talk, work on BBWN projects and business. Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 338 Newbury Street, Boston. All women welcome. Please call (617) 247-6683 (BIS-MOVE) for more information.

Tues 27 7:00 - 9:30 pm **Oral History: A Tool for Advocates and Organizers.** See March 13 listing.

7:00 pm 30+ **Lesbian Rap: Setting Limits,** 7:30 pm **Bisexual Women's Rap:** Involvements with difficult personalities. Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

Wed 28 7:30 pm **Carl Kurtz, Bikes not Bombs founder** will discuss current events in Nicaragua. He will present a slide show on the growing bicycle transportation industry in Nicaragua and especially the projects sponsored by Bikes not Bombs and the Nicaraguan Organization of Revolutionary Disabled People. At Red Book, 92 Green St, Jamaica Plain (Green St stop on the Orange Line). Donation requested. Info: Mira Brown at 277-2017

Thurs 29 7:30 pm **Incest Survivors Open Discussion** Free. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St, Cambridge. Info: 354-8807 Wheelchair Accessible

Sat 31 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm **Third Annual Community Works Auction** will be held at the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, 41 Second Street, East Cambridge (Lechmere T Stop). The evening will feature both out-loud and silent bidding, music, complimentary food, and a cash bar. Free. Community Works is a federation of 21 Boston area social change groups including Mobilization for Survival, Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, Women for Economic Justice, CPPAX and Poor People's United Fund. info: 423-9555

April 1 10:30 am - 12:30 pm **Palestinians in Ramalah and El-Bireh** will be the focus of a community forum at Temple Beth Shalom, 8 Tremont St in Cambridge. Participants in the recent Cambridge-Ramallah/El Bireh Sister City Campaign trip to the West Bank will share stories and slides. Info: 492-4934

April 2 7:30 pm **Women's Agricultural Cooperatives and Palestinian Economic Self Sufficiency** is the topic of a talk at the Boston Food Co-op, 449 Cambridge St, in Allston. Participants in the recent Cambridge-Ramallah/El-Bireh Sister City Campaign trip to the West Bank will share stories and slides. Info: 492-4934

The deadline for the April issue will be March 16.

Send to: What's Left in Boston

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